

SHOWING OR HIDING GRIDLINES

Gridlines are horizontal or vertical lines that extend through the plot area to help you visualize the connections between data points and values or categories. Gridlines start with the tick marks on an axis and extend through the plot area.

Use the Gridlines drop-down menu on the Chart Tools Layout ribbon to display or hide the gridlines.

For more control, use the More Gridlines Options selection to display the Format Gridlines dialog. Here you can control the color, thickness, and style of the lines.

ADDING TRENDLINES, DROPLINES, AND ERROR BARS

Excel's advanced chart options let you add details that help you spot trends more easily. For example, in a line chart that plots daily closing stock prices over time, you can add a trendline and a moving average that smooth out some of the peaks and valleys in the data. You can do the same with a column chart to show a smooth trend over time. Select the series, right-click, and select Add Trendline.

In surface charts, you can add a vertical dropline from the data point to the horizontal axis. Use the Lines icon on the Chart Tools Layout ribbon.

For line charts that show two related series, you can add a column between the data points of each series. Use the Up/Down Bars icon in the Analysis group of the Chart Tools Layout ribbon.

For charts that project data, you can add error bars that define the upper- and lower-error limits of your projections by using standard statistical measures. For example, error bars can extend a certain percentage, a certain standard deviation, or a fixed amount from the data points. You'll find these options on the Error Bars icon of the Chart Tools Layout ribbon.

Figure 22.36 shows an example of each element from the Analysis group.

Figure 22.36
Trendlines, Drop Lines, Up/Down Bars, and Error Bars can be automatically drawn on the chart by Excel 2007.

